



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$3.4 Million to Spur Technology Development in Massachusetts

MassVentures START Program, in partnership with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, awards grants to cutting-edge Massachusetts companies

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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**MARLBOROUGH** — This week, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded \$3.4 million to 20 innovative, early-stage, high-growth companies in Massachusetts. These awards, a collaboration between the MassVentures START program and the MassCEC, will help grow employment opportunities, promote manufacturing and commercialization, and stimulate innovation across the Commonwealth. Today's funding will support companies located across the Commonwealth spanning the technology sector, from robotics to clean energy to defense.

"Our administration is committed to remaining a global leader in innovation and life sciences," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "Through the funding of the START program, we are pleased to provide vital support to these growing companies as they contribute to the Commonwealth's robust innovation economy."

"Supporting early-stage Massachusetts companies helps drive job creation and economic activity," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "Our administration is committed to supporting Massachusetts' high tech industry, especially as these entrepreneurs and innovators make the leap from concept to commercialization."

"Massachusetts continues to lead the nation as a great place for companies to grow to scale," **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash**. "These awards allow start-up companies to leverage substantial federal dollars to pursue critical, cutting-edge research, moving from concept to commercialized products. We are happy to support programs like this, as well as our M2I2 Initiative, to help innovators bridge the gap from what is possible to real, tangible results."

Now in its seventh year, the START program has awarded nearly \$19 million to 74 Massachusetts Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II projects and helped winning companies raise additional capital of \$278 million.

"SBIR is America's \$2 billion seed fund and MassVentures START program helps companies capitalize on these funds and arms them with the capital, experience, mentoring and network they need to transition to high-growth companies," **said Jerry Bird, President, MassVentures**. "The START program fosters growth of companies and readies them for venture funding with the goal of helping them build their businesses here in Massachusetts."

For 2018, MassVentures and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) have again partnered to increase the scope and capacity of the MassVentures START Program. MassCEC has committed up to \$400,000 to START in 2018. The MassVentures and MassCEC cooperative endeavor is the result of the success of the expansion of START eligibility to recipients of US Department of Energy SBIR grants.

"We are pleased to partner with MassVentures to expand the START program to include these exceptional cleantech companies pursuing innovative clean energy solutions," **said Massachusetts Clean Energy**

**Center CEO Stephen Pike.** “These companies represent the best of the Commonwealth’s robust cleantech sector and will be able to leverage these funds into significant private investment, leading to job creation and the continued growth of the state’s nation-leading innovation economy.”

Today, MassVentures’ Jerry Bird joined Marlborough Mayor Arthur Vigeant, Mass Clean Energy Center leadership, and members of the Marlborough Economic Development Corporation at Intrinsix Corp., a former START winner in Marlborough to announce the 2018 START winners.

“It was my pleasure to welcome the winning companies to Marlborough for this exciting announcement,” **said Marlborough Mayor Arthur Vigeant.** “We are proud of the innovative economy we have fostered in Marlborough. START winners like Intrinsix that call Marlborough home help drive growth across MetroWest and all of Massachusetts.”

“I’m proud that small businesses are driving the revitalization of many communities across my district, and I want to thank the Baker-Polito administration for making these critical investments in local technological development,” **said Senator Jamie Eldridge.** “Helping these innovative businesses to grow will directly boost our local economies and spur job growth.”

“I am thrilled to hear that Metamagnetics, Inc. has been awarded a 2018 START Program Stage II grant,” **said Representative Danielle W. Gregoire.** “MassVentures has been critical to the growth of this local company, and I am eager to see what additional strides will be made with this further investment.”

The MassVentures START (SBIR Targeted Technologies) program ensures growing Massachusetts-based companies are able to commercialize technologies developed under SBIR and STTR contracts. The program is a three-year process designed to provide increasing financial rewards to the companies that demonstrate progress on the path toward commercialization. At the outset of Stage I, 12 companies are selected to each receive \$100,000 in funding. Over the course of the next year, each company, with advice and coaching provided by MassVentures and the START ecosystem, strives to execute on its product commercialization strategy. After that year, up to six of the original 12 winners are selected by an expert panel to each receive \$200,000 grants. At the conclusion of the second year, the judges choose two companies to each receive \$500,000.

### **About MassVentures**

*MassVentures is a quasi-public venture capital firm focused on fueling the Commonwealth’s innovation economy by funding early-stage, high-growth Massachusetts startups as they move from concept to commercialization. The MassVentures’ START program received the prestigious 2015 Tibbetts Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration. More information on the START program and the MassVentures 5 Year START Report can be found at [www.mass-ventures.com/start-program/](http://www.mass-ventures.com/start-program/).*

## **About MassCEC**

*The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) is a state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy sector across the Commonwealth to spur job creation, deliver statewide environmental benefits and to secure long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts.*

## **2018 START Program Stage I Winners**

### **Physical Sciences Inc., Andover**

Physical Sciences Inc. has developed a low cost, rapid coating technology that allows for lower cost, higher energy density batteries. START funding will support the development of high performance specialty batteries leveraging this technology for the unmanned vehicle markets. “The battery market requires prototype demonstrations prior to acceptance and incorporation in a design. This places a significant burden on companies developing new technologies to fund full product development prior to technology acceptance. START funding will support required production and initial qualification testing of specialty batteries for the targeted markets.” -Bill Marinelli, Chief Operating Officer, Physical Sciences Inc.

### **Apprendis, Berlin**

Apprendis’ flagship product, Inq-ITS, is a science learning platform with simulations for Physical, Life, and Earth Science - all aligned with NGSS standards. Students engage in interactive science labs while receiving real time coaching. Teachers get alerts when kids struggle. Schools get the data they need to demonstrate growth. “The START program will give Apprendis a large boost in getting research-based educational technology into more classrooms. The seed money will help us extend our online science learning platform (Inq-ITS), provide personalized support to more students, and get real-time data into the hands of more teachers.” - Dr. Janice Gobert, Co-Founder & CEO, Apprendis

### **CF Technologies, Inc., Boston**

Innovator and environmental award winner CF Technologies, Inc. of Hyde Park introduces a process converting rancid, zero-value, environmental-burden, brown grease into high quality biodiesel using efficient supercritical fluids and catalytic conversion technologies. “Commercialization funding provided by the MassVentures START program will fulfill our immediate needs for a focused market research program and to hire a key customer facing team member. Most importantly, the funding will provide the acceleration needed to bring our successful technology to commercial success. Thank you MassVentures!” --John Moses, President & Founder, CF Technologies, Inc.

### **CueThink, Inc., Boston**

CueThink has built a peer-to-peer platform that improves students' critical thinking skills and math collaboration in K-12 classrooms. The application provides consistent language and problem solving structure for students to excel on performance-based assessments. CueThink is a winner of the NewSchools Venture Fund Math Challenge grant and was awarded a 5-star rating for pedagogy by Common Sense Education. "The START program award will help CueThink hire key marketing and sales personnel to expand our pre-sales pilot programs and ensure stronger customer growth and success. This grant comes at a vital time in the organization's trajectory and builds on the momentum we are experiencing." -Sheela Sethuraman, Founder and CEO, CueThink.

### **TelAztec LLC, Burlington**

TelAztec LLC has developed and manufactures its patented "RANDOM" type anti-reflection (RAR) nano-textures that are nanometer scale textures etched directly into the bulk optical material that provide extreme optical performance with no added absorption, unsurpassed laser damage threshold levels, and extended lifetimes for high energy laser optics. "The START program will help further accelerate and expand on the commercialization that has begun for TelAztec's "RAR Nano-texture" line of high energy laser optics through increasing production and manufacturing capabilities as well as expanding our customer base both domestically and internationally." --Douglas Hobbs, President, TelAztec

### **Adaptive Surface Technologies, Cambridge**

Adaptive Surface Technologies, Inc. (AST) is an industrial technology company that produces materials and coatings that repel fluids, contaminants, and biological fouling. Their products can be used for a wide range of industrial, marine, and medical applications, while protecting and improving the environment. "The Mass Ventures START program funds will give AST the additional resources it needed to explore its first opportunity in the B2C sector. We are excited to commence work on testing market need & pull, developing a user friendly-product, and conduct field trials with local Massachusetts industrial partners." David Ward, CEO, AST

### **Uniqarta, Inc., Cambridge**

Uniqarta is a Cambridge-based startup commercializing an ultra-high-speed component placement solution for next generation microLED displays offering superior picture quality and greatly reduced power consumption. "The START program will provide Uniqarta with funds to accelerate our business development and patent protection efforts," stated Ronn Kliger, Uniqarta co-founder and CEO. "It complements our SBIR-funded technology development work to help us attract industry-leading commercialization partners."

### **Quantum Diamond Technologies, Inc., Somerville**

Quantum Diamond Technologies, Inc. (QDTI) is using its unique quantum sensing technology to create a novel, magnetic-based detection platform that will enable rapid, simple, low cost and ultrasensitive diagnostics instruments for the Life Sciences, Central Lab and Point of Care environments. “We are excited to receive the MassVenture START program award that will provide capital and advisory support as we work to expand our diagnostic assay development efforts”, said John Pena, President, Quantum Diamond Technologies, Inc. “The additional resources will help accelerate our efforts to achieve valuable early customer feedback.”

### **Solchroma Technologies, Inc., Somerville**

Solchroma Technologies is building the world’s most vivid reflective digital displays for Smart Cities and urban environments. “The MassVentures START program will provide Solchroma with the resources to accelerate commercialization of our ground-breaking reflective display technology - created and built in Massachusetts. Through enhanced customer engagement and partner development, START funds will enable Solchroma to launch the future of digital signage in Smart Cities worldwide.” -Roger Diebold, CEO & Co-founder, Solchroma Technologies

### **C-2 Innovations, Inc., Stow**

C-2 Innovations designs and builds all-weather amphibious robots for monitoring, sampling and mapping various terrains. “C-2 innovations, Inc is extremely grateful for the MassVentures Start trust, by supporting us financially and with business insights. The support comes at a key moment in our business development providing the critical funds for capability demonstrations and marketing. Without it we would be in a real struggle to survive.” - Arnis Mangolds, CEO, C-2 Innovations, Inc.

### **Battery Resourcers, Worcester**

Battery Resourcers recycles lithium ion batteries such that the recovered components can be used in new batteries. “The Mass START program will enable Battery Resourcers to hire key commercial development personnel here in Masschusetts thereby accelerating our commercialization efforts specifically with regards to obtaining contracts for Battery Resourcers recovered cathode material” -Eric Gratz, CEO, Battery Resourcers

## **2018 START Program Stage II Winners**

### **Spero Devices, Inc., Acton**

Spero Devices is developing a high-performance accelerator chip for extended reality applications in mobile platforms, enabling real-time, low power performance at a dramatically reduced price point. “The

START program provides critical capital in support of Spero Devices' commercialization efforts, enabling the company to perform business development to identify customers and demonstrate requirements, advance and expand our patent portfolio, and pursue strategic investors as we raise capital to drive product development. All of this is made possible by MassVentures and its START program." -Jai Gupta, CEO Spero Devices

### **VocaliD, Inc., Belmont**

VocaliD is a voice AI company that creates an infinite variety of affordable and customized digital voices to empower individuals and brands to be heard in their own voice. "The MassVentures START program has been instrumental in accelerating our transition from our R&D efforts toward commercialization, said Rupal Patel, Founder & CEO @ VocaliD. The combination of funding alongside the team's strategic advice and support have been game-changing for a technology company like ours that is defining a new product category."

### **Massachusetts Materials Technologies LLC, Cambridge**

Massachusetts Materials Technologies (MMT) developed and is bringing to market test instruments for nondestructive evaluation of mechanical strength of components and assets - both actively in the field or at factories and warehouses - without the need to extract samples for destructive laboratory strength tests. MMT's initial customers operate high-pressure oil and gas transmission pipelines where service interruption is not an option and more accurate pipe strength data is needed to extend the service life and operational limits of aging assets. The need for performance-based nondestructive testing extends to aging chemical and nuclear plants. MMT is highly engaged with industry leaders to concurrently develop the technology platform and ensure that the value is captured by the customers. "Due to the contributions by the START program, our team has built expertise and experience to concurrently develop technologies and secure sales traction with customers." - Simon Bellemare, CEO, Massachusetts Materials Technologies LLC

### **Silverside Detectors, Cambridge**

Silverside Detectors is developing next-generation nuclear radiation detectors that help governments reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism. Silverside's neutron detector provides state-of-the-art detection efficiency at a fraction of the cost of currently deployed detectors, allowing significant expansion of detection coverage in ports, borders, and in networks around cities. Silverside works directly with federal agencies and local first responders to provide the best science in the most practical, user-oriented solutions. "The START grant is a huge multiplier on the technical investment that the government made through the SBIR award. We're excited to use the funds to take the core technology to customers and

adapt it for real-world application. The START grant represents an opportunity for commercialization that is very hard for a small company to fund on its own."

#### **Xiletric, Inc., Fall River**

Xiletric has developed a new technology that mitigates damage to Li-ion batteries from elevated temperature and high cell potentials. Their technology helps cell manufacturers provide superior energy storage products with lower cost of total ownership to their customers. "Xiletric is extremely grateful for the support from the MassVentures START program which will help support customer trials and initial scale-up activities." – Steve Weiss, Founder & CEO, Xiletric

#### **Metamagnetics, Inc., Westborough**

Metamagnetics is commercializing Autotune Filter technology, a new approach to electromagnetic interference mitigation in communications systems ranging from 4G LTE and public safety networks to tactical datalinks and satellite communications. Metamagnetics' solution helps reduce size, weight, and cost while improving resiliency and interoperability of wireless communications systems. "We are delighted to continue building on the success of our previous partnership with MassVentures that allowed us to transition our self-biased circulator technology into production with thousands of units shipped this year," said Dr. Anton Geiler, President of Metamagnetics. "For this new Stage II grant we are looking to take a major step towards ISO9001 certification, make key hires here in Massachusetts, deploy an ERP solution, and develop a financial plan for manufacturing scale-up."

### **2018 START Program Stage III Winners**

#### **Dynamo Micropower Corp., Somerville**

Dynamo Micropower provides the oil and gas industry with a game changing power solution called the PowerCore, which is able to burn Any-Gas for fuel to power Any-Load found in the field. The solution, based on a novel gas turbine, reduces energy costs by up to 80 percent for customers. "The START program will give Dynamo a head-start in commercial launch of our product by enabling us to engage in strategic marketing and pre-sales program, getting us well on our way to our ultimate goal: successful commercialization of our game changing technology." – Jason Ethier, CEO, Dynamo Micropower

#### **Cambrian Innovation, Inc., Watertown**

Cambrian Innovation provides distributed wastewater treatment and resource recovery solutions for industrial businesses. Cambrian's award-winning EcoVolt® product suite offers cost-effective and sustainable options for onsite wastewater treatment, water reuse, and clean energy generation to some of the top names in food and beverage processing, including Lagunitas Brewing Company, Bear Republic Brewing Company, Russian River Brewing Company, and Rombauer Vineyards, among others. "The



START program has been a great resource for our company, and we are excited to continue working with MassVentures as we grow. We have already made great progress on the second generation of our flagship product, the EcoVolt Reactor, thanks to the funding and support from the program. We look forward to building upon that progress in Stage III." - Matthew Silver, Founder & CEO. Cambrian Innovation

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